

A
P O E M

ON THE

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL;

TO WHICH IS ADDED, A

HYMN TO THE DEITY.

POST MORTEM VIVIMUS.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MEEK. *K*

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CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK

TO WHICH IS ADDED A

LIST OF THE BOOKS



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P O E M, &c.



COME, sacred Muse, my humble verse inspire,
Teach me to breathe thy pure, celestial fire,
To soar beyond the vulgar bounds of art,
Refine mens morals, and amend their heart;
Find every where an argument to prove, 5
That man's immortal, and that God is love.
By thee great MILTON reach'd the awful height
Of Fancy's rapid, vehement, touring flight,
When in heroic strains he sang our fall,
Our loss of God, of paradise,—of all. 10
O grant to me a portion of his fire,
While man's immortal part employs the lyre!

Teach me from Infidelity to wrest
 The proof sophistic or the merry jest ;
 Man's endless being to mankind rehearse,
 In all the dreadful majesty of verse.

15

No property of matter known to us,
 Can, for a moment, sense and thought produce :
 Inactive, it for ever must remain
 Fixt in one place, by an eternal chain ;
 Move when 'tis mov'd, or stop its tardy course,
 When not urg'd on by some propelling force.
 The flaming orbs that gild the upper sky,
 Round their own centers would no longer fly,
 Cease to shine forth with their accustom'd fire,
 And leave dame Nature as if 'twould expire,
 Did not HIS voice, which gave them power to run,
 Still bid them travel round their central sun.*

20

25

YE sons of folly, who would have us say,
 That men, like brutes, are creatures of a day ;
 That when they die, and drop into the grave,
 No more perception of existence have ;

30

* As it is demonstrable that all motion is rectilineal, the planets, instead of moving in elliptical orbits, would fly off in a tangent, did not the omnipotent arm of Jehovah whirl them about.

Extract from matter all the powers of mind—

Come, make it reason, and convince mankind.

Go, bid yon mountain its own height declare,

Of all your intellectual pleasure share;

Tell whence it came, and what its end shall be,

And why a mountain rather than a tree.

Go, bid yon cedar all creation scan,

Or teach it one poor science, if you can;—

How large, how distant, those bright orbs that rise

To cheer the night, and flame along the skies.

THOUGH thinking statues never were descry'd,

Yet, what if matter be so modified

By him who made, sustains, and orders all,

As to become what we the SPIRIT call?

Thus, quitting solid ground, men plunge in mud,

And dare by IFS to be as wise as God.

Go, ask the chemist, if to analyse

Metallic bodies, proves them dull or wise;

Shews to his eye an innate power to move,

To think, reflect, to reason, hate, or love?

But Spirit wanders unconfin'd o'er all

The works of God, on this stupendous ball:

Now here, now there, now to the frozen pole,

Quicker than light'ning flies the conscious soul;

Mounts far on high beyond the solar rays,

And only sinks in God's eternal blaze.

No lumpish, inert, fluggish matter can
 Resemble this AUTOMATON of man ; 60
 It moves, it stops, it reasons when it will,
 Nor needs external force, nor foreign skill ;
 But soon as words can the grand tour rehearse,
 Completes the circuit of the universe.
 Thus, light and darkness, heat and cold, no more 65
 Are opposites, than mind and matter's power ;
 Compound, divide, and vary as you can,
 Yet still 'tis matter, but it is not man.
 Shall then this wond'rous spark of heavenly fire
 Cease to exist, or with its clay expire ? 70
 Sooner may rocks float on the mighty main,
 Dust mount in air, and then descend in rain ;
 Sooner may insects heaven and earth command,
 Bears live in waves, and whales upon the land :
 This emanation from the God of love, 75
 While God is God, shall think, reflect and move ;
 No man of wisdom will this truth deny,
 On the account of one poor HOW or WHY ;
 For if all objects we would comprehend,
 Such HOWS and WHYS would never have an end. 80
 That the swift stag was not created man,
 We see ; but why ?—say, Priestly, if you can,*

* Dr Joseph Priestly, who, by his doctrine of materialism, has reasoned himself out of his reason, and out of the very first principles of every science,

How soul and body are in one conjoin'd,
 A mass of clay, a pure, ethereal mind,
 May well surprise;—but why for this deny 85
 What all our feelings daily justify?

THE vast unbounded faculties of mind,
 By nought conceivable can be confin'd.
 Wide fields of knowledge when they travel o'er,
 Still they look round, and eager pant for more; 90
 O'er awful tracts of science wing their flight,
 Leave these behind, and others catch their sight.
 Thus, ever knowing, man still more would know,
 Than his researches can on earth bestow;
 For while he ardently pursues the prize, 95
 He only sees the goal—then falls, and dies.
 Such faculties were ne'er on man bestow'd
 For no design, by Nature's mighty God;
 If then on earth they miss their glorious view,
 In worlds to come they shall that end pursue; 100
 Strain all their force, eternally admire,
 Adore or dread the God of love and ire.

If we the grand, stupendous orbs survey,
 Which round their suns pursue their rapid way,
 Or cast our eyes o'er nature's works below, 105
 Where gentle streams in undulations flow;
 Where verdure smiles o'er every happy plain,

'This truth is clear—there's nothing made in vain,
 But if the soul of man shall ever die,
 Or with the body in dark silence lie, 110
 Unconscious of itself, and all around,
 Confin'd, inanimate, within the ground ;
 Then, that its boundless powers are made in vain,
 Needs not the aid of logic to explain.

THE most uncultivated nations have 115
 Their hell and paradise beyond the grave.
 Wild Indians must to pleasant mountains go,
 To dwell in peace, beyond the reach of wo.
 Wise Greeks and Romans, in the days of old,
 Firm and unshaken did this maxim hold ; 120
 That everlasting happiness and pain,
 For good and bad assuredly remain.
 In gloomy Tartarus these are confin'd,—
 Foes of the gods, of virtue, and mankind ;
 While fair Elysium teems with endless bliss, 125
 For those whose actions merited no less.
 Vile Mahomet, th' Arabian prophet too,
 Whose lust and policy none could subdue ;
 Though fraught with folly, never did deny
 A future state of joy and misery. 130
 The prophet spoke, and Arabs hold it must,
 A hell of boiling lead, and paradise of lust.
 Thus, mankind seem in this to harmonize,

That man gives up the ghost, but never dies ;
 Therefore, let sceptics here their folly see, 135
 For mould'ring matter cannot endless be.

Now, let us turn our serious thoughts within
 To virtue's friend, the enemy of sin ;
 To heaven's avenger of its injur'd laws,
 Of inward anguish or of bliss the cause. 140
 Soon as from moral rectitude we stray,
 Conscience awakes, and fills us with dismay ;
 For till black vice becomes a righteous thing,
 Heaven's true vicegerent cannot fail to sting.
 What horror's lash the dying sinner's soul, 145
 When bursting clouds of vengeance o'er him roll !
 Above, beneath, within, around him rise,
 Hells join'd to hells, and wrath-denouncing skies.
 His pallid cheek and rolling eyes declare
 The dreadful majesty of wild despair. 150
 Above, he sees the endless foe of sin,
 And more than hell torments him from within ;
 Hell from beneath gapes for its guilty prey,
 And fiery fiends drag his poor soul away.
 Turn next to yonder dying christian's bed, 155
 And see how hope supports his drooping head ;
 Hope full of God, of heaven and joy divine,
 Lives while he dies, and grows with his decline.

Faith mounts before him through the azure sky,
 To where th' Almighty's throne is fixt on high ; 160
 Smooths the far-distant, grand celestial road,
 And flaming seraphs waft him to his God.
 Such is the holy man's support below,
 And such the sinner's agony and wo ;
 The one anticipates eternal pain, 165
 The other pants for glory's endless reign.
 Say, then, can he whose great and dreadful name
 Is the I AM, unchangeably the same,
 Leave man o'er wild, delusive scenes to rove,
 To dread a BUGBEAR, or a NOTHING love ? 170
 Fly, hell-born thought—nay, hell would blush to own
 A monster, gender'd by mankind alone.
 Why smiles the saint when ghastly death appears,
 If all his painful, gloomy days and years
 Are never follow'd by a life of bliss, 175
 But lost in the black sea of deep forgetfulness ?
 Why starts the sinner when he must depart,
 When fear, and grief, and guilt o'erwhelm his heart ?
 Why stand aghast, the judge and pannel too,
 Or wish to fly, if nothing can pursue ? 180
 Such hopes and fears, like means, must have their end,
 And lasting joy or misery portend :
 The one the dawn of everlasting day,
 The other of perpetual dismay.

But prostituted learning now must rise, 185
 And with infectious breath pollute the skies;
 Attempt through sophistry's meand'ring road,
 To lead mankind from happiness and God.
 Wild superstition, habits form'd by time,
 Intrigues of statesmen, weeds of every clime, 190
 Raise in the human mind a jarring strife,
 And give nonentities a real life.
 As lies and errors, caught in early youth,
 Grow with our age, and ripen into truth,
 Keep reason sleeping, and let fancy run, 195
 Till manhood's ended ere 'tis well begun;
 So erudition, policy, and time,
 May bring dire phantoms to their wish'd-for prime,
 Lift poor, vain man to what he cannot be;—
 A destin'd heir of immortality. 200
 Thus speaks the Infidel, whose learned pride
 Throws him adrift on fancy's roaring tide:
 His reason lost, the rudder of his mind,
 He cannot turn, but drives before the wind,
 Till, in some vortex, by the tempest hurl'd, 205
 He sinks, the plague and nuisance of the world.
 Say, where was policy when time began,
 And nought but Adam bore the name of man?
 Where habit's force, or learning's awful sway,
 When angels hail'd the new-born dawn of day? 210

Did prejudice, matur'd by days and years,
 Rend Adam's guilty soul with griefs and fears
 When, having tasted of the fatal tree,
 He vainly fought from God's pure eyes to flee?
 What made him court the shelter of the grove, 215
 When vengeance thunder'd through the skies above;
 When God's dread voice more terrible than night,
 Thrill'd through his soul, and dragg'd him into light?
 'Twas conscience rising in majestic ire,
 And pointing out yon dreadful lake of fire, 220
 As the fit prison for a traitor's soul,
 That stung his heart, and rag'd without controul.
 The voice of conscience loudly pleads for heaven,
 That sin, unpardon'd here, is ne'er forgiven,
 But hurls the sinner down to endless night, 225
 While dying faints, with unsubdu'd delight,
 Soar up to God beyond the milky way,
 And ope' their eyes in everlasting day.

If mind and matter differ, as they must,
 And if the body crumbles into dust, 230
 The active soul can never feel the shock
 Of dissolution's unrelenting stroke.
 If man's progressive,—if an ample store
 Of knowledge only makes him pant for more;
 If conscience tells him he must never die, 235
 But sink to hell, or soar above the sky;

Proofs more conclusive reason cannot give,
That man was made for evermore to live.

BUT revelation speaks in bolder strains,
Of Salem's joys, and Tophet's endless pains. 240
The beggar sleeps, and up to glory flies,
Borne by seraphic spirits through the skies ;
The rich man also moulders into dust,
Awakes in hell, and feels that God is just.
Nor forked lightning with its horrid glare, 245
No deep volcanoes, vomiting in air
Their flaming entrails, with destruction fraught,
Teach man what by the book of God is taught,
Ætna may deluge all th' adjacent ground,
And man and beast may dread its thund'ring sound ; 250
But hell pours forth eternal streams of fire,
Where finners dying, never can expire ;
Their groans and yells but feed the raging flame,
And last as long as God remains the same.
'Tis utter darkness, where the very light 255
(If light there be) exceeds the blackest night ;
A sea of brimstone, without bank or shore,
Where shipwreck'd finners view the land no more.
'Tis chains of darkness, binding down the soul,
Where pain and anguish their sunk eye-balls roll ;— 260
A lake of fire where rebel souls are drench'd,
A flame of flames which never can be quench'd,
The sacred page leaves not a doubt behind,

That foes to God for ever are confin'd
 In hell's dark prison, there to weep and mourn, 265
 To gnash their teeth, to welter, and to burn.
 They leave the world with hearts to evil prone,
 And join with Dives in th' eternal groan.
 The ransom'd of the Lord in rapture rise
 From beds of death, to mild, pacific skies ; 270
 Die but to live, to sigh and weep no more,
 And pass through Jordan to Emmanuel's shore.
 He who on Calvary their ransom paid,
 Who, with his dying breath, " 'tis finish'd," said,
 Expands the portals of the highest heaven, 275
 To welcome those his mercy has forgiv'n.
 Hosannas now employ their holy tongues,
 Breathe in their prayers, and animate their songs ;
 But when hosannas from their worship fly,
 Their hallelujahs rend the vaulted sky. 280
 In Salem's bright abode no scorching sun,
 Nor twinkling stars their wonted courses run ;
 God and the Lamb, with beams of love divine,
 Through heaven's august, eternal concave shine.

If endless bliss and everlasting pain, 285
 For good and bad beyond the grave remain,
 What salutary lessons every where
 Proclaim aloud, " to meet your God prepare ?"
 The friend of pride, debauchery and lust,
 Who never is benevolent or just ; 290

Who braves the thunders of almighty ire,
 And spurns the thought of everlasting fire,
 May here behold his certain, dreadful doom,
 When Christ in clouds to judge the world shall come.
 When death terrific to his soul appears, 295
 With the black roll of sins of former years,
 Where can he turn to ease his troubled heart,
 When every sigh, and every groan's a dart?
 When all his vain, delusive hopes expire,
 And fell Despair lights up her horrid fire? 300

COME then, O sinner, to the crimson flood
 Of our Messiah's meritorious blood;
 Unlike to Abel's, tis of fury free,
 Has wash'd ten thousand heirs of hell like thee.
 Presume not in the midst of doubts and fears, 305
 Of heavy groans, and penitential tears,
 To think that mercy cannot reach thy state,
 Or seal thy pardon, though thy sins are great.
 Can vilest rebels here be all forgiven?
 Yes: Peter, Paul, and David are in heaven. 310
 Kifs then the Son, ere his vindictive ire
 Sweep thy immortal part to Tophet's fire;
 For as the soul forfakes her house of clay,
 She sinks to hell, or mounts the azure way.
 But, if you will not instantly embrace 315
 This gift of God to Adam's ruin'd race,
 The solemn, dreadful day will shortly come,

When Christ shall call his weary pilgrims home,
 His foes consign to death's eternal reign,
 And all the nameless energies of pain. 320
 Then rocks and mountains will in vain be fought,
 To hide thy head, or crush thee into nought :
 Then foes to God no longer walk at large,
 When hell, the sea, and death give up their charge.
 Say you are rich ; your riches cannot save 325
 Your soul from hell, nor body from the grave.
 Say you are honour'd, lov'd, esteem'd by all ;
 These can't from death your guilty spirit call,
 Drag on the broken wheels of time, nor stop
 The growth of agony,—the death of hope. 330
 But safe beneath the banner of the cross,
 Your death is gain, your life is often loss ;
 For presence here is absence from the Lord,
 Whose heavenly mansions nameless joys afford.

MAY God convince, convert, and pardon here ; 335
 For when the judge in glory shall appear,
 Or his grim messenger a summons give,
 To bid you die, or cease on earth to live ;
 Unpardon'd guilt must draw your soul from God,
 And plunge it deep into the fiery flood. 340
 God grant that, when the thread of life is broke,
 And your last accents here on earth are spoke,

Your soul triumphant may to heaven ascend,
And feast on joys that neither cloy nor end !

O may the Infidel permit the light 345
Of glorious truth to strike his purblind sight !
From every quarter proofs on proofs arise,
Man's thinking faculties to eternize. H
Reason, and God, and his internal frame,
Unite in concert to expose his shame. 350
His folly, guilt, stupidity, or pride,
May from his eyes impending danger hide ;
But, lo ! the day is fixt in God's decree,
When countless millions must his folly see ;
When, NOT TO BE, may form his fruitless prayer,
Yet shall he not of non-existence share. 356

H Y M N

TO THE

D E I T Y.

Zeus Terpikeraunos. Homer.

WHAT seraph in th' abodes of bliss,
Or mortal here below,
Jehovah's nature can express,
Or all his grandeur shew?

O essence infinite, unknown,
Though present every where ;
It flames around his awful throne,
And thunders in the air !

God rides the rapid whirlwind's wing,
And on a cherub flies ;
He smiles, and countless beings sing,
His frown obscures the skies.

Who can in glory equal God,
Resemble him in might ?
He rules creation with a nod,
And darkness turns to light.

No being can his search evade,
Nor one forgotten lie ;
All are important, for he made
The angel and the fly.

The bright, stupendous orbs on high
Are round their centers hurl'd ;
By him who bids the lightning fly
Terrific round the world.

He bids the swelling ocean sleep,
Its foaming billows die ;
He nods, and from the boiling deep
The hoary surges fly.

To him th' enraptur'd hofts above
Their hallelujahs raife,
And the dear wonders of his love
Attune their hearts to praife.

In Salem, every holy tongue
Adores the great I AM,
And swells the sweet, triumphant fong
Of Mofes and the Lamb.

In the dark dungeon of his ire
His awful prefence reigns,
Adds vigour to eternal fire,
And horror to their chains.

With all the majesty of wo
His Being fills the place,
Where finners fhall for ever know
The forfeiture of grace.

Gay, blooming health at his command
Inhabits every vein ;
He fends difeafes round the land,
And ficknefs reigns again.

By him the fields and woods rejoice,
The valleys laugh and sing ;
All nature with her varied voice
Adores her God and King.

From insects in the verdant grass,
To seraphs round the throne,
Each lower tribe would fain surpass
Its higher, nobler one.

This soul-transporting, holy strife
By gratitude is rais'd ;
Jehovah spoke them into life,
And therefore shall be prais'd.

His goodness feeds, his power sustains,
And they must hymn his love,
In air, on earth, in wat'ry plains,
And Zion's courts above.

The great Creator every where
Is lov'd, rever'd, ador'd,
By all who of his bounty share,
Or tremble at his word.

His praises vibrate in the gale,
 And in the thunder roar,
 Rush furious in the rattling hail,
 And foam along the shore.

In wild and artless notes they rise
 From every humble spray;
 The lark transmits them to the skies,
 And ushers in the day.

Begin, then, Christian, here below,
 And sing Jehovah's grace,
 Till safe beyond the reach of wo,
 You see him face to face!

13 JY 61
 FINIS

